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ABSTRACT

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has initiated bold steps to improve the quality and quantity of occupational programs in the 11 states served by the Association. These steps include: (1) the Southwide Conference on Occupational Education sponsored in cooperation with Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, (2) the appointment to the Commission on Higher Education of a member whose background is in technical education, and (3) the appointment of an ad hoc committee to study and make recommendations concerning occupational education. Another sign of activity in this area is the recent growth of postsecondary institutions of occupational education, evidenced by the fact that 60 percent of these institutions have been established since 1960. States have also been encouraged to assist in evaluating occupational programs for the purpose of assessing quality and determining whether the needs of students and the community are being met. (JS)

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THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PROGRAMS OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

JOHN K. COSTER
Center for Occupational Education

Occasional Paper No. 2

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NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY AT RALEIGH
1968

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Professor of Agricultural Education and Director
of the Center for Occupational Education

1968

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PREFACE

This paper initially was prepared for presentation to the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in Atlanta, Georgia, on June 17, 1968. It was prepared and presented on behalf of the Southwide Research Coordinating Council on Occupational Education.

In essence, the paper summarizes and is based upon an unpublished study of postsecondary occupational education in 11 southern states which was conducted jointly by the Center and the Southwide Research Coordinating Council on Occupational Education under the direction of Dr. C. C. Scarborough, Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Education, North Carolina State University at Raleigh. This unpublished study, entitled, "Preliminary Results of a Survey of Opportunities for Postsecondary Occupational Education in the South," was conducted, in part, to ascertain the number of postsecondary occupational education institutions in the South which were not being accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

This paper manifests the interest of the Center for Occupational Education and the Southwide Research Coordinating Council on Occupational Education in accreditation, and more specifically, in the proposed program of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to improve occupational education in the South and to provide nationwide leadership in focusing attention on the issues and problems of occupational education and on bringing the prestige and resources of regional accrediting agencies to bear on improving the status and quality of occupational education in the member institutions.

John K. Coster

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All Center publications are subject to critical review prior to publication. The members of the review panel who reviewed this manuscript and recommended its publication in the Occasional Paper Series were Dr. Joseph Clary, Executive Director, North Carolina Advisory Council on Vocational Education, Dr. B. Eugene Griessman, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, and Dr. Robert T. Williams, Assistant Professor of Industrial and Technical Education, both of North Carolina State University.

THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PROGRAMS OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The positive and dynamic action taken by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to improve the quality and quantity of programs of occupational education[1] in the 11 states served by the Association is unparalleled in the Nation. Evidence of this positive and dynamic action includes:

--The Southwide Conference on Occupational Education,[2] sponsored by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in cooperation with the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Southern Company at Atlanta on April 5-6, 1967, represented a forthright step to marshall the resources of colleges and universities, state departments

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[1]The term "occupational education" is used in this paper to denote a broader program than that generally applied by "vocational education" or by "vocational and technical education." Occupational education is defined as ". . . education designed to contribute to occupational choice, competence, and advancement," whereas vocational education refers to ". . . specialized education for an occupation other than a technical or professional occupation," and technical education refers to ". . . specialized education for occupations ordinarily requiring two years of preparation beyond the high school which emphasize the science, mathematics, and laboratory procedures related to the occupations for which the students are preparing." H. M. Hamlin, Citizen Evaluation of Public Occupational Education. Center Monograph No. 1; Raleigh: Center for Occupational Education, North Carolina State University, 1967. P. 1.

Occupational education includes vocational education, but it also includes programs designed to acquaint students with the world of work, programs designed to assist students in making occupational choices, and programs designed to develop attitudes and work habits which may be offered in elementary, junior high, secondary, and post-secondary schools.

[2]Felix C. Robb, We Shall Not Rest. Atlanta: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1967.

of education, postsecondary institutions offering programs of occupational education, secondary schools, regional educational laboratories, and business and industry to attack crucial issues and problems related to the full and complete development of viable and realistic programs of occupational education.

--The appointment of a member of the professional staff of the Commission on Higher Education, with background and training in technical education, to augment the resources of the Commission in accrediting institutions that offer the Associate of Science or equivalent degree upon the completion of a two-year technical program.

--The appointment of the ad hoc Committee on Occupational Education to study and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for extending the program of the Southern Association to improve, through the voluntary accreditation process, institutions offering postsecondary programs of occupational education which currently are not being accredited under existing Commissions of the Southern Association, and to provide additional resources for the evaluation of programs of occupational education in institutions which are eligible for accreditation by the Commission of Secondary Education or the Commission of Higher Education.

The Growth of Postsecondary Institutions of Occupational Education

The initiative of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to improve the quality and quantity of programs of occupational education parallels the growth of postsecondary institutions of occupational education in the South. According to the survey conducted by the

Southwide Research Coordinating Council on Occupational Education,[3] there are 356 public postsecondary institutions in the 11 southern states that offer programs designed to prepare persons for employment in occupations that do not require the bachelor's degree. Approximately 60 per cent of these institutions have been established since 1960. The number of institutions reported does not include institutions under construction, nor does it include junior or community colleges that are operated independent of state divisions of vocational education or other state agencies designated to administer programs in community and junior colleges, technical institutes, and area vocational-technical schools.

The 356 institutions enrolled approximately 175,000 students in full-time vocational and technical programs in 1966-67. The Division of Vocational and Technical Education of the U. S. Office of Education estimated the national full-time enrollment in postsecondary programs for 1967 to be 525,000.[4] Hence the 11 southern states served by the Southern Association, with less than one-fourth of the Nation's population, had one-third of the total enrollment in full-time postsecondary occupational education programs in the Nation.

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[3]C. C. Scarborough, "Preliminary Results of a Survey of Opportunities for Postsecondary Occupational Education in the South." Unpublished research report, Center for Occupational Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1968.

[4]Division of Vocational and Technical Education, National Fiscal and Statistical Data and Projections Vocational and Technical Education. Program Planning, Development, and Budgeting Series No. 1; Washington: Division of Vocational and Technical Education, U. S. Office of Education, 1967.

In the following paragraphs, the growth of the postsecondary occupational education institutions is highlighted with brief descriptions of the growth in selected states.[5]

North Carolina. North Carolina's postsecondary program for occupational education was started in 1957 with an appropriation by the General Assembly to establish Industrial Education Centers. By 1959-60 eight centers were in operation with a total full- and part-time enrollment of 1,300 students. Currently there are 50 institutions in North Carolina, including 13 community colleges and 37 technical institutes, that enrolled a total of 166,033 full- and part-time students in 1966-67. Approximately one-third of the 50 postsecondary institutions in North Carolina are accredited by the Southern Association.

Kentucky. The number of postsecondary institutions in Kentucky has increased from 21 in 1960 to 50 in 1968. Seventy-four institutions will be in operation by 1970, with 12 institutions presently under construction and 12 more approved for construction in the future. In 1968, the institutions in the state included 14 community colleges (extensions of the University of Kentucky), two area vocational schools operated under local boards of education, and 12 area vocational-technical schools and 22 extension centers operated under the State Division of Vocational Education. The 24 institutions being or to be constructed are to be state-operated extension centers, for a total of 58 state-operated institutions. None of the state-operated institutions are accredited.

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[5]Abstracted from Scarborough, op. cit.

Georgia. In 1960, Georgia had two residential vocational schools in operation. Twenty-one area vocational-technical schools have been established since 1960. These institutions provide vocational and technical programs for full- and part-time youths and adults. None of the institutions in Georgia are accredited.

Tennessee. Tennessee has established 22 area vocational-technical schools since 1960. These institutions provide vocational and technical programs for full- and part-time youth and adult students, and in some instances, for high school students. None of the institutions in Tennessee are accredited.

The growth of postsecondary programs in occupational education in the South is tangible evidence of an intent to increase economic productivity, raise the gross state product, and augment per capita income. Such an intent can only be realized through the development of a comprehensive system of occupational education programs that relate immediately to changing technological conditions and demands to produce persons who are employable and who can perform at levels acceptable to positional requirements in business and industry.

Evaluation and Accreditation

The increase of fiscal inputs in programs of occupational education has been accompanied by increased emphasis on evaluation and accreditation. Subsequent to the enactment of the Vocational Education Act of 1963, the authorization of Federal funds for vocational and technical education was increased from $56,920,000 in 1964 to $259,650,000 in 1968, and expenditures of Federal funds was increased from $55,027,000

in 1964 to $233,794,000 in 1966.[6] Section 12 of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 provided for the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to appoint an Advisory Council on Vocational Education to assess the impact of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 on the development and administration of programs, and the extent to which the occupational needs of all groups in the community were being served by programs developed in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

State divisions of vocational education have been encouraged to institute programs of evaluation and accreditation to assess the quality of the programs being offered in the states. Attention is being given to this problem by the several states, and all of the 11 states served by the Southern Association are in the process of developing programs of self-evaluation. Some states are instituting programs of accreditation at the postsecondary level. Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina are among the states in the Nation that have progressed rapidly toward developing programs of accreditation and self-evaluation.

During the past several years, the American Vocational Association, through one of its standing committees, has pressed for the development of a system of accreditation of programs of occupational, vocational, and technical education. The Committee on Evaluation of the American Vocational Association has worked closely with the National Commission on Accreditation and the Division of Vocational and Technical Education of the U. S. Office of Education to foster the development of

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[6]Subcommittee on Education, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate, Notes and Working Papers Concerning the Administration of Programs Authorized Under Vocational Education Act of 1963 Public Law 88-210, As Amended. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. P. 20.

programs of accrediting institutions offering programs of occupational education. It is the position of the Southwide Research Council on Occupational Education that accreditation of institutions offering occupational education should be integrated into the activities of the existing regional accrediting associations. The positive action of the Southern Association and subsequent action that may be taken places the Southern Association in the position of exerting dynamic leadership in designing and developing a system for the accreditation of institutions and programs of occupational education. Just as the southern states are leading the Nation as a whole in the development of programs of occupational education, so, too, may the Southern Association lead the Nation in developing a system of accrediting programs of occupational education.

The Groups to be Served Through Occupational Education

Reference was made previously to the positive and dynamic action of the Southern Association to improve the quantity of occupational education in the 11 southern states. In the development of its program of accreditation and improvement of occupational education, the Southern Association is in a position of utilize its prestige not only to ascertain that what the institutions presently accredited, or petitioning for accreditation, are doing represents sound educational practice, but also to ascertain whether the programs in these institutions have been developed, or are being developed, to serve all groups in the community.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 provided for two conceptual changes in vocational education programs:

1. that vocational programs should serve the occupational needs of all groups in the community, including persons in secondary schools,

persons who have graduated from or left high schools and who are available for full-time study in postsecondary occupational education programs, and persons who are employed, but who need further training to achieve advancement or stability in employment; and

2. that vocational programs should meet the needs of persons with academic, socioeconomic, and other handicaps that prevent them from succeeding in regular programs of vocational education.

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders cites the failure of the school system to provide an adequate program of education for youth in ghetto areas. Three of its recommendations with regard to vocational education are germane to the problem of providing adequate programs of occupational education for all groups in the community:

> --Full implementation of vocational training for high school dropouts.
>
> --Elimination of barriers to full participation of ghetto youth in vocational education programs; some vocational schools attempt to improve the quality of their student body and enhance their prestige by raising entrance requirements. This policy eliminates those in greatest need. This practice should be discontinued and support for these students expanded.
>
> --Follow-up support and assistance to ghetto youth receiving vocational training . . . . Vocational educators should continue to provide counseling and guidance for their students until they have been successfully placed in a training-related job.[7]

The magnitude of the need to provide adequate programs of occupational education for all groups of persons who need these programs is supported by data reported by the Advisory Council on Vocational Education:[8]

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[7] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. New York: The New York Times Co., 1968, pp. 454-5.

[8] Subcommittee on Education, op. cit., pp. 15, 34.

--From 1964 to 1966 the number of students enrolled in vocational programs in secondary schools increased from 2,140,756 to 3,048,248, an increase of 33 per cent. But even though five of every six youths will not achieve a college education, only one fourth of the youths in secondary schools in the Nation were enrolled in programs of vocational education in 1966.

--From 1964 to 1966 the number of youths enrolled in postsecondary full-time programs increased from 264,402 to 442,097, an increase of 67 per cent. But less than 4 per cent of the youths between the ages of 18 and 21 were enrolled in full-time programs of vocational and technical education in 1966.

--From 1964 to 1966 the number of adults enrolled in part-time vocational programs increased from 2,161,234 to 2,530,712, an increase of 17 per cent. But less than 3 per cent of adults between the ages of 22 and 64 were enrolled in part-time adult extension classes in 1966.

--No categorical enrollment data were available for persons with special needs in 1964; the number enrolled in 1966 was 49,002. The number of persons with special needs enrolled in vocational education programs represented less than 1 per cent of the total enrollment of vocational and technical education throughout the Nation in 1966.

The problem of developing programs of occupational education to meet the needs of all persons in each community that need these programs rests with specialists in occupational education. The problem of initiating these programs rests with the institutions. The problem of ascertaining that all persons who need occupational education are served rests in the evaluative and accrediting agencies and associations, with a

special responsibility falling to the state departments of education.

Process and Product of Occupational Education

The ultimate value of programs of occupational education is a function of the extent to which inputs from the occupational education system add significantly to the employability of the enrollee. If the system is realistic, then it is imperative that a linkage be established between the institution and the potential employers of the products of the system. The linkage directions are bilateral.

Concomitantly, if systems of evaluation and accreditation are to be realistic, attention must be given to both the process and the product of the occupational education system. The Southern Association's actions to involve business and industry in the development of its plan to improve the quality and quantity of occupational education programs manifests an awareness of this realism. It is highly desirable that the involvement of the potential employers of the products of occupational education programs be continued as further action is taken to improve the quality and quantity of occupational education programs.

Support for Action

The interests of the Southern Association in intensifying and expanding its program to develop a program of accreditation for occupational education institutions not being accredited by existing commissions has received strong support and approval from leadership personnel in the 11 states served by the Association. Strongly stated opinions were expressed to the effect that such action is sorely needed. Positive action by the voluntary and prestigious accrediting association is needed to stimulate

the continued development of programs of occupational education designed to serve all persons in American society who need these programs and to provide the opportunity for these persons to prepare for employability or to achieve advancement and stability in employment.

The Southwide Research Coordinating Council on Occupational Education commends the Board of Trustees on the enlightened program on which it has embarked, and pledges its support in the furtherance of the program.